

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
April 30 - May 6, 2010

1. [Biden: U.S. Committed to European Partnership](#) (05-06-2010)
2. [U.S. Reaffirms Its Support for WMD-Free Middle East](#) (05-06-2010)
3. [U.N. Permanent Five Promote Nuclear Nonproliferation](#) (05-06-2010)
4. [Biden's International Herald Tribune Op-Ed on Europe's Security](#) (05-05-2010)
5. [United States Reveals Size of Nuclear Arsenal](#) (05-04-2010)
6. [Iran, North Korea Criticized for Violating Nuclear Commitments](#) (05-04-2010)
7. [Obama on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference](#) (05-03-2010)
8. [Mideast Peace Talks to Resume](#) (04-30-2010)

[Biden: U.S. Committed to European Partnership \(05-06-2010\)](#)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States has no doubt about the need for a vibrant European Union because it is essential to American prosperity and long-term security, Vice President Biden said in a May 6 speech before the European Union Parliament in Brussels.

Biden, who is on a [three-day diplomatic mission](#), praised the [Lisbon Treaty](#), which has given the European Union expanded powers and responsibilities aimed at enhancing the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the 27-nation bloc.

“What began as a simple pact among a half-a-dozen nations to create a common market for coal and steel grew into an economic and political powerhouse, a community dedicated to free thought, free movement and free enterprise, a Europe that one historian has called not so much a place but an idea,” [Biden said](#).

“And I’m here to reaffirm that President Obama and I believe in this idea, and in a better world and better Europe it has already helped to bring about, a Europe where all member states benefit by negotiating trade agreements and fighting environmental degradation with one unified voice, a Europe that bolsters the cultural and political values that my country shares with all of you, a Europe that is whole, a Europe that is free, and a Europe that is at peace,” the vice president said.

Biden is in Brussels for consultations with NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and other NATO officials, and for meetings with EU and Belgian officials on a range of issues concerning mutual security, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran and its nuclear development program, counterterrorism, climate change and energy security, missile defense, relations with Russia, and the promotion of economic growth. It is Biden’s second visit to Europe as vice president, and is a direct effort to strengthen bilateral relations with the EU. The second part of his trip takes him to Madrid for bilateral talks with Spanish officials.

The United States and European allies have been working together in Afghanistan to bolster the Afghan army and police forces, while also working to help its fledgling government create the infrastructure it needs to lead the country independent of outside assistance. Efforts there are across two fronts — one military, to provide security while its military and police grow strong enough to confront insurgents, and the other civil, to provide infrastructure to meet the growing needs of a modernizing nation.

“Across the troubled landscape of Afghanistan and Pakistan, we are working together to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaida and the Taliban fighters and to train an Afghan army and police force,” Biden said. “In order to build Afghanistan’s governing capacity, the United States, the European Union and its member nations are deploying significant financial resources and civilian resources.”

Biden said that while sustaining these missions has not always been popular, “you all know as I do, it is required.” And it is leaders’ obligation to make the case to their populations, he added.

The United States and Europe are also standing together to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, a development that would endanger the region and allies in Europe, he said. Iranian leaders have spurned collective good-faith efforts and continue to threaten regional stability, he said.

“Iran’s nuclear program violates its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and risks sparking a nuclear arms race in the Middle East,” Biden said.

The United States and several European allies on the U.N. Security Council have been circulating a draft resolution aimed at imposing sanctions on Iran’s regime for not cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency on its fledgling nuclear development program.

“Tehran faces a stark choice: abide by international rules and rejoin the community of responsible nations, which we hope for, or face further consequences and increasing isolation,” Biden said.

NATO MEETINGS

Earlier May 6, Biden met with NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen and military and political representatives to discuss the NATO-led coalition effort in Afghanistan, enhancing relations with Russia and a proposed limited missile defense system for Europe.

Instead of an advanced missile defense system that had been proposed by the administration of President George W. Bush, President Obama has opted for a more limited system using Patriot missile batteries in several East European nations and ship-based anti-missile systems in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea.

Biden said the United States has proposed an adaptive missile defense system to deter and defend against missile attacks from rogue nations, like Iran, that might threaten the European continent.

U.S. Reaffirms Its Support for WMD-Free Middle East (05-06-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States joined the four other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in expressing a commitment to fully implement a 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) resolution that would establish the Middle East as a region free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

According to a May 5 joint statement issued by China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States to the 2010 NPT review conference, the five countries “are committed to a full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East and we support all ongoing efforts to this end. We are ready to consider all relevant proposals in the course of the Review Conference in order to come to an agreed decision aimed at taking concrete steps in this direction.”

The United States was one of the original sponsors of [the resolution](#) (PDF, 12KB), which was issued as an annex to the 1995 NPT Extension Initiative. The resolution noted that efforts to reach a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors contribute toward establishing the region as a WMD-free zone and called on all states to accede to the NPT and to take “practical steps” to verifiably establish the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as delivery systems.

The joint statement said [nuclear weapons-free zones](#) around the world “have made and continue to make an important contribution to the strengthening of the international nuclear nonproliferation regime in all its aspects, and to achieving nuclear disarmament and the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.”

It calls for the consideration of additional zones “where appropriate and in conformity with the wishes of regional states,” and welcomes dialogue to “resolve the outstanding issues related to nuclear weapon-free zones.”

The statement expressed concern about the proliferation risks from Iran’s nuclear program and called for the country’s “full and immediate compliance” with its international obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano [told the review conference May 3](#) that Iran has not provided his agency with the cooperation necessary for the IAEA to verify that the nuclear material in Iran’s possession is being used for peaceful purposes.

Calling for nuclear energy to be developed “in a culture of openness and transparency,” the five permanent members recognized that all states that are compliant with the NPT have an “inalienable

right” to the research, production and use of peaceful nuclear energy, which not only can help meet energy and development needs while addressing climate change concerns, but also offers applications in areas such as medicine, agriculture and industry.

Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton [said May 3](#) that the Middle East “may present the greatest threat of nuclear proliferation in the world today,” and that the Obama administration is “prepared to support practical measures” that will help establish the region as a WMD-free zone, but [acknowledged](#) that due to “the lack of a comprehensive regional peace and concerns about some countries’ compliance with NPT safeguards, the conditions for such a zone do not yet exist.”

The United States “wants to see every country be a signatory to the NPT. We want universal adherence,” Clinton said in response to a question about Israel, India and Pakistan.

“We continue to urge all states, every single one of them outside the NPT, to join the treaty, accept the full-scope safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency, as required under the treaty,” the secretary said.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, but it has not acknowledged having a nuclear arsenal and is not a party to the NPT.

Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley told reporters May 5 that the United States will discuss the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East with other participants, including nonaligned countries, during the May 3–28 review conference in New York.

Crowley said significant progress toward a comprehensive peace in the region “might give people confidence that the conditions could emerge that allow this to advance.”

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher said April 30 that a WMD-free zone in the Middle East is “something that the region has to embrace, and they have to embrace it at the right time when all parties can participate.”

The 1995 resolution calls for a conference that all regional parties would attend. Tauscher said full attendance is “unlikely unless there is a comprehensive peace plan that is being accepted and worked on.”

But she said the Obama administration is working with the other permanent members and members of the Arab League, including Egypt, to move forward on the resolution. “We believe that that is something that should be delivered upon and we’ve been working to get the elements together,” she said, including a comprehensive draft that Arab and nonaligned states are reviewing.

But Tauscher said that while the Obama administration is seeking consensus to move forward on the 1995 resolution, there also needs to be “language that would deal with Iranian noncompliance of their NPT obligations.”

“It’s important to look at Iran specifically — an NPT party that is in wide variation outside of its commitments — and ... it is very important that is done together,” she said.

U.N. Permanent Five Promote Nuclear Nonproliferation (05-06-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council strongly endorsed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and called on all 189 nations that participate in it to conform to its principles to block the spread of nuclear weapons, pursue disarmament and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

“The NPT is fundamental to protecting global peace and security from the threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons,” the five members said in [a joint statement](#) May 5 at U.N. headquarters. The permanent members, also known as the P-5, are Great Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and they all possess nuclear weapons.

The United Nations is hosting the eighth review conference of the treaty May 3–28. Every five years since the NPT went into effect in 1970, the review conference evaluates its operation and implementation. The pact is the primary barrier to the unchecked spread of nuclear arms across the globe. Delegates from the 189 nations belonging to the treaty are discussing compliance based on its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

“It has served the international community well for the past four decades,” the joint statement said. And the five nations praised the international community’s “shared commitment to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons ... in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.”

President Obama has made achieving a [world free of nuclear weapons](#) a central goal of his presidency. While acknowledging that it may not happen during his presidency or his lifetime, Obama has said it is a goal worth pursuing. Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev [signed a New START Treaty in Prague](#), Czech Republic, April 8 that, if ratified, would reduce each nation’s nuclear arsenals over seven years to 1,550 strategic warheads and reduce the means to deliver them.

For Obama’s efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons and promote greater peace and stability, he was awarded the [2009 Nobel Peace Prize](#).

And the permanent Security Council members also endorsed the 2010 START Treaty, which when fully implemented would result in the lowest number of deployed nuclear weapons since the 1950s.

The joint statement also endorsed the full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which Obama has pledged to see ratified by the United States Senate. The CTBT aims to keep nations from conducting nuclear tests because such tests create instability and also threaten the environment with excess nuclear radiation.

“The proliferation of nuclear weapons undermines the security of all nations. It sets back the cause of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, and imperils the prospects for strengthening international cooperation in nuclear energy, including the role we wish to see such cooperation play in combating climate change and ensuring sustainable development of nuclear energy,” the joint statement said.

U.S. Expects Mideast Proximity Talks to Begin Within Days (05-05-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell has begun four days of discussions with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and the State Department has described his first meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as “good and productive,” adding that it expects proximity talks between the two sides will begin before Mitchell returns to Washington May 9.

Speaking to reporters May 5, State Department Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley said Mitchell will meet again with Netanyahu May 6 before having discussions with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas May 7 and May 8.

“We hope and expect formally to move forward with proximity talks before Senator Mitchell leaves the region on Sunday,” Crowley said. After his return to Washington, the special envoy will report to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on what was discussed, Crowley said.

During the four days of meetings, “issues can be discussed, they can be evaluated, and follow-up meetings can further refine what was discussed,” Crowley said. “At the end of this string of meetings, we’ll be in a position to characterize where we are.”

The Obama administration has been working to start indirect or “proximity talks” between the two sides with the goal that they will lead to direct face-to-face talks.

[Secretary Clinton said April 30](#) that the United States is seeking a two-state solution to the conflict, as well as a regional peace that would include Syria and Lebanon and the normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

“We believe that through good-faith negotiations, the parties can mutually agree to an outcome which ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable state based on the 1967 lines with agreed swaps and Israel’s goal of a Jewish state with the secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israel’s security requirements,” Clinton said.

[White House press secretary Robert Gibbs](#) said President Obama spoke with Prime Minister Netanyahu May 3 ahead of Mitchell’s arrival in the region.

“They discussed how best to work together to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in particularly by making full use of substantive proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians and transitioning to direct negotiations as soon as possible. They also discussed regional challenges and the president reaffirmed his unshakable commitment to Israel’s security,” Gibbs said.

Biden's International Herald Tribune Op-Ed on Europe's Security (05-05-2010)
Security decisions must be made "in close coordination" with allies

In advance of his trip to Spain and Belgium this week, the following op-ed by Vice President Joe Biden has been posted on-line by the International Herald Tribune today and will be published in the newspaper tomorrow, May 6, 2010:

"ADVANCING EUROPE'S SECURITY"

The International Herald Tribune
May 6, 2010

I.H.T. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR
By JOSEPH R. BIDEN Jr.

This week I will sit down with NATO ambassadors to advance the ongoing dialogue among the United States and its closest allies on the future of European security. I do so because the United States is firmly committed to the view that any decisions about Europe's security must be made in close coordination with our European allies and partners. We will decide nothing about our European allies and partners without them.

The United States and Europe can take much pride in what we have achieved together: We have built the most successful alliance in history, one that has kept the peace in the Euro-Atlantic region for more than 60 years and helped transform Europe into a beacon of democracy and prosperity. These achievements have been sustained by security institutions, principally NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, built through the cooperation of Americans and Europeans over decades. But now it is vital that we ask how these institutions, which have served us so well, should adapt to the challenges — and opportunities — of a new era.

NATO is revising its "strategic concept," which contains the guiding principles for NATO's strategy to deal with security threats, to prepare the alliance for the challenges of the 21st century. Russia also has come forward with new ideas about European security. These issues deserve thoughtful consideration and discussion. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined our approach to European security in a speech in Paris in January. As she pointed out, the United States does not believe Europe needs new treaties or institutions, but will instead seek to create a more secure Europe that takes into account the changing nature of the threats we face, and respects the core principles of existing institutions such as NATO and the O.S.C.E.

We will seek to uphold these principles by moving forward along the following, parallel tracks. First, we need to work together to broaden our commitments to reciprocal transparency about all our military forces, including both conventional and nuclear forces, and other defensive assets in Europe, including missile defenses. Our hope is to do this with Russia. We no longer see Europe in zero-sum, Cold War terms.

Promoting trust within Europe requires understanding how neighbors understand their security challenges and how they intend to confront those challenges. And the new START treaty demonstrates that trust and certainty are best built by increasing the exchange of information about our doctrine, forces and intentions.

We will come forward with proposals to improve military transparency through a variety of steps, including enhanced exchanges of military data and site visits. Just this week, the United States released information about the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile. We think it is in our national

security interest to be as transparent as we can about the U.S. nuclear program. We call on other states to do the same.

Second, we will explore reciprocal limitations on the size and location of conventional forces. These should be relevant to the world of today and tomorrow, not yesterday's world. We should also be steering our militaries away from basing their exercises on scenarios that bear little resemblance to reality, instead working together to plan for real threats, especially those that come from outside of Europe.

Third, we have to devote more attention and resources to deterring and combating security threats to Europe that come from outside Europe. The threat of war among major powers that haunted Europe for centuries has receded, even if regional flashpoints remain. This is a great achievement, but today the Continent faces new and pernicious threats: the spread of weapons of mass destruction to rogue regimes with access to ballistic missile technology, the ongoing threat of terrorist attack enabled by havens in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the prospect of cyber-attack by criminal networks and other actors, and significant energy security challenges. No nation in Europe is immune from such threats; they affect all countries on the Continent equally. Our common efforts, including through NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and our efforts to combat global terrorism, underscore this. We must focus our efforts to address these external challenges and update our security arrangements to meet the true risks we face today.

Fourth, we need a more effective conflict-prevention, conflict-management, and crisis-resolution mechanism to defuse crises before they escalate. The Russia-Georgia crisis in August 2008 reminded all of us that we cannot take security in Europe for granted or become complacent. To prevent such events from recurring, we support the creation of an O.S.C.E. Crisis Prevention Mechanism that, in situations of tensions between O.S.C.E. states, would seek to prevent crises before they start. And in the case that they do, it would empower the organization to offer rapid humanitarian relief, help negotiate a cease-fire, and provide impartial monitoring. We also believe that the O.S.C.E. should facilitate consultations in the case of serious energy or environmental disruption and dispatch special representatives to investigate reports of egregious human rights violations.

Finally, we must affirm that security in Europe is indivisible, the importance of territorial integrity for all countries in Europe, and the right of states to choose their own security alliances. Sustainable security in Europe requires peace and stability for all of Europe — not old or new Europe, East or West Europe, NATO or non-NATO Europe. It includes the partners and friends who seek the stability and prosperity that comes with the democratic standards of the E.U. and NATO.

We seek an open and increasingly united Europe in which all countries, including Russia, play their full roles. The indivisibility of security also means that all European countries must abide by certain shared rules: above all, a commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the right of all countries to choose their own alliances freely. The threat or use of force has no place in relations among European powers. Nor can we allow large countries to have vetoes over the decisions of smaller ones. And most importantly, we cannot permit the re-establishment of spheres of influence in Europe.

The United States crossed the Atlantic twice in the last century in the defense of Europe and stood shoulder to shoulder with our allies through the Cold War. We did so because of our shared values and because of our shared security — the recognition that the peace and stability of Europe is essential to U.S. security. That is just as true today as it was in the 20th century and that is why we are engaging vigorously in the debate over the future of European security.

There is still much to do as we seek a fully democratic, secure, peaceful and prosperous Europe. With these principles, we can reinvigorate and guarantee European security for a new era.

(Joseph R. Biden Jr. is vice president of the United States.)

United States Reveals Size of Nuclear Arsenal (05-04-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — In an effort to strengthen global arms control, the United States has revealed that it has 5,113 operational warheads in its nuclear arsenal.

“Increasing the transparency of our nuclear weapons stockpile, and our dismantlement as well, is important to both our nonproliferation efforts and to the efforts we have under way to pursue arms control that will follow the New START Treaty,” a senior U.S. defense official said at a Pentagon briefing May 3.

The U.S. nuclear stockpile includes both active, or operational, and inactive warheads. The inactive stockpile, which includes both weapons that have been retired or are to be dismantled, numbers several thousand, according to senior defense and energy officials at a background briefing.

“We think it is in our national security interest to be as transparent as we can be about the nuclear program of the United States,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said [at a press conference May 3 following the opening](#) of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in New York. Clinton said this effort to make the U.S. arsenal transparent is a confidence-building measure to encourage others to follow suit.

The 5,113 total reflects an 84 percent reduction from the stockpile’s maximum of 31,255 on September 30, 1967. And it also reflects a 75 percent reduction in the nation’s stockpile at 22,217 warheads when the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989, the two senior officials said.

“We expect further reductions in the stockpile due to the New START Treaty, if ratified, if it enters into force,” the senior defense official said. Before this release, the number of warheads in the nuclear arsenal had been classified.

At a ceremony April 8 in Prague, the Czech Republic, President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev [signed the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty](#) (START) that aims to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals by approximately 30 percent to 1,550 warheads each, further lessening tensions and the chances of them ever being used in a war.

“The spread of nuclear weapons to more states is also an unacceptable risk to global security — raising the specter of arms races from the Middle East to East Asia,” [Obama said at the April 8 ceremony](#).

The announcement detailing the size of the U.S. arsenal comes at the opening of the NPT Review Conference at the United Nations in New York. Conferences to review the 1970 NPT have been held every five years since it went into effect. The treaty is the primary vehicle to thwart the spread of nuclear weapons, affecting nations with nuclear weapons and those without them.

Delegates from the 189 countries that belong to the treaty will discuss compliance and the need for amendments and revisions. The NPT is based on three elements — nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Releasing information in the three categories will present a model of transparency that the United States hopes other will follow, the senior defense official said at the Pentagon briefing.

Nuclear weapons in the United States are developed and managed jointly by the Defense and Energy departments.

Iran, North Korea Criticized for Violating Nuclear Commitments (05-04-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Countries at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in New York must use the monthlong gathering not only to strengthen efforts toward disarmament and expanded use of peaceful nuclear energy, but also to send a strong message to violators such as Iran and North Korea that “they will pay a high price for breaking the rules,” said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In talking to reporters May 3 at the United Nations, Clinton refuted Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s claims that Iran has accepted a deal from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [to have its uranium enriched in another country](#), thereby helping to ease international concerns that Iran is using its nuclear program to produce weapons.

“We have seen no indication that Iran is willing to accept the IAEA’s October 2009 proposal or any variant of that proposal that would achieve the confidence-building goals that were intended,” [Clinton said](#). “If Iran has truly changed its position, it should provide a clear indication of that to the IAEA.”

The Iranian president “knows the address of the IAEA, he knows what it is expected of him; he can respond at any time, and we would still welcome a good-faith, legitimate, genuine response. But we are, as you know, waiting,” Clinton said.

The secretary said the Iranian leader had addressed the conference earlier May 3 seeking to “distract attention” from his government’s failure to live up to its international obligations for its nuclear activities.

“Time and again, the Iranian government has tried to make its own failures to abide by its duties into an issue between Iran and the United States. But this conference itself underscores that the issue at stake is much larger,” she said.

Both U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano criticized Iran’s position in their statements at the May 3 opening of the conference.

“Let us be clear,” Ban said. “The onus is on Iran to clarify the doubts and concerns about its program.”

He urged Iran to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning its nuclear activities and to fully cooperate with the IAEA. Ban also encouraged Iran to accept the nuclear fuel-supply proposal, describing it as an “important confidence-building measure.”

Director-General Amano said Iran has not provided the IAEA with the cooperation necessary for the agency to verify that the nuclear material in Iran’s possession is being used for peaceful purposes.

“I continue to request Iran to take steps towards the full implementation of its comprehensive safeguards agreement and relevant resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council and to clarify activities with a possible military dimension,” Amano said.

WITHDRAWING TO AVOID ACCOUNTABILITY

Amano said North Korea has not allowed the IAEA to implement nuclear safeguards on its reactors since 2002 and as a result, the IAEA “cannot draw any safeguard conclusion” for the country.

In addition, he said, in April 2009, North Korea ceased all cooperation with the IAEA in implementing the ad hoc monitoring and verification arrangement that was part of the Six-Party negotiation process that also involved South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Ban encouraged North Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks “as soon as possible without preconditions” in order to realize the goal of the process, which is “the verifiable de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

[In her remarks to the United Nations May 3](#), Clinton criticized North Korea for “withdrawing from the NPT after being caught cheating” and then subsequently announcing that it was carrying out two nuclear tests.

At the conference, NPT signatories should “find ways to dissuade states from utilizing the treaty’s withdrawal provision to avoid accountability,” Clinton said.

“I am not proposing to amend the treaty to limit the rights of states to withdraw. But we cannot stand by when a state committing treaty violations says it will pull out of the NPT in an attempt to escape penalties and even pursue nuclear weapons,” she said.

NPT members have “invested decades in building a global nonproliferation regime, and that work will be rendered meaningless if the international community continues allowing nations to break the rules of the NPT with impunity,” she said.

Addressing North Korea, Iran and potential violators of the treaty, the secretary said those countries “must know that they will pay a high price if they break the rules.” Unfortunately, she said, “that is certainly not the case today,” since the international community has an “unacceptable” record of enforcement in recent years.

“We need to consider automatic penalties for the violation of safeguards agreements, such as suspending all international nuclear cooperation or IAEA technical cooperation projects until compliance has been restored. And we must use all of the possible financial and legal tools to disrupt illicit proliferation networks. That means tightening controls on transshipment and enhancing restrictions on transfers of sensitive technology,” Clinton said.

The international community will ultimately be judged by its actions and its willingness to uphold its responsibilities, rather than its words, Clinton said. The NPT is weakened when states flout its rules and develop illicit nuclear weapons capabilities.

“We must respond” when the IAEA asks for more resources and greater authority in order to verify treaty compliance, she said, and act when the agency calls on states to ensure they are meeting their obligations.

Rather than focus on their differences, Clinton said, NPT signatories “must acknowledge we are all in this together and set a course for 40 more years of progress” to uphold and strengthen the 1970 treaty’s “three pillars” of disarmament, nonproliferation and peaceful energy use.

Obama on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (05-03-2010) **U.S. committed to NPT goal, pursues framework for civil nuclear cooperation**

To the participants of the NPT Review Conference,

Forty years after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, we have come together to answer a simple question with consequences for us all: as individual nations and as an international community, will we uphold the rights and responsibilities of all nations in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons?

For four decades, the NPT has been the cornerstone of our collective efforts to prevent the proliferation of these weapons. But today, this regime is under increasing pressure. A year ago in Prague, I therefore made it a priority of the United States to strengthen each of the treaty’s key pillars as we work to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and to pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

Over the coming weeks, we will see whether nations with nuclear weapons will fulfill their NPT obligations to move toward nuclear disarmament. Building on our new START Treaty with Russia and our Nuclear Posture Review, which reaffirms the central importance of the NPT, the United States is meeting its responsibilities and setting the stage for further cuts.

We will see whether nations without nuclear weapons will fulfill their obligation to forsake them. History shows that nations that pursue this path find greater security and opportunity as an integrated member of the international community. Nations that ignore their obligations find themselves less secure, less prosperous and more isolated. That is the choice nations must make.

Finally, we will work to ensure that nations that abide by their obligations can access peaceful nuclear energy. The United States is committed to this goal and will pursue a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation that permits nations that uphold their responsibilities to enjoy the peaceful uses of the atom.

Today, the eyes of the world are upon us. Over the coming weeks, each of our nations will have the opportunity to show where we stand. Will we meet our responsibilities or shirk them? Will we ensure the rights of nations or undermine them? In short, do we seek a 21st century of more nuclear weapons or a world without them?

These are the questions we must answer, the challenges we must meet. At this conference and beyond, let us come together, in partnership, to pursue the peace and security that our people deserve.

Sincerely,

President Barack Obama

Mideast Peace Talks to Resume (04-30-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals, Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Indirect peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians are expected to be held within days, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said April 30.

Former Senator George Mitchell, the U.S. special envoy for Middle East peace, will help mediate the talks that are expected to be held late in the week of May 3, Clinton said at a joint press conference with Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Muhammad al-Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, who is also the Kuwaiti foreign affairs minister.

“Ultimately, we want to see the parties in direct negotiations and working out all the difficult issues that they must,” Clinton told reporters. “They’ve been close a few times before. So, we are looking to see the resumption of those discussions.”

Clinton said the United States was also looking forward to a meeting of the Arab League May 1 in Cairo to support the commitment by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to move forward with these indirect talks.

The talks had been tentatively projected to begin in March, but broke off before they could begin after it was announced by the Israelis that [1,600 more houses would be built in East Jerusalem](#). During indirect talks, U.S. mediators will shuttle between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister al-Sabah said that Middle East peace is important to Kuwait and the region as a whole. As a strategic ally and partner with the United States, al-Sabah said, it is incumbent on Kuwait to help the United States achieve this goal.

“We support fully the position that the United States has taken,” al-Sabah said at the joint press briefing.

State Department spokesman Philip Crowley told reporters April 30 at the regular daily briefing that the United States has “worked intensively in this.”

The United States long has sought a two-state solution negotiated by both nations to foster greater regional peace and enhanced normal relations with other Arab states, Clinton said.

“The Middle East will never realize its full potential, Israel will never be truly secure, the Palestinians will never have their legitimate aspiration for a state unless we create the circumstances in which positive negotiations can occur,” Clinton told reporters.
